

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE MILITARY  
ORIGINALLY DURING THE CIVIL WAR

by

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During the Civil War, the chaplaincy was largely a matter of individual response to the needs. There was very little that was organized by the denominations. The quality of the religious efforts varied a great deal and in some cases, was so very poor that the whole program was in danger of being discredited. President Lincoln set up the regulation in 1862 that Chaplains, henceforth, would be endorsed or certified by their respective church or denominational officials as being in good standing and of suitable character and training for the work of a chaplain. This, indeed, was the beginning of better standards for chaplains.

There were some worthy chaplains in the civil war, but there were a few unworthy ones. A tremendous amount of good work was accomplished by the chaplains and a host of civilians who attached themselves to the troops.

In each of our wars the chaplaincy has suffered from being set up on a crash basis. This is always hard on standards and thorough and careful selection of chaplains. Recently, we have witnessed a much better experience since there has been a large enough active duty war and in the reserve to make a workable program of improvement. In previous times, the military chaplaincy was collapsed when we were not at war. Then it was inevitable that we would build up again under great pressures when war came.

It is my purpose in this historiography to examine the chaplaincy during the civil war. Since there was little

the chaplaincy was a general approach mentioned specifically on the - interview.

There has never been a religious need of our fighting men which has not been met, by chaplains - Franciscan friars, Jesuit priests, Indian Mission, Puritan divines - served voluntary service. Some hundred years before the American Revolution, there was a strong and uneven tendency to establish military chaplaincy on a more formal basis.

General Washington was the first influential leader to insist on official recognition of the chaplaincy. When Washington took command of the colonial army in 1775, one of his first orders concerned religion and morality in the ranks. He wanted his men to attend religious services and to abstain from drunkenness and profanity. Reflecting this attitude less than two months after Washington took full command, the Continental Congress on July 26, 1775 adopted a resolution embodying the legal origins of the Corps of Chaplains.

Throughout the war, chaplains were chosen by various officials, including Congress, state legislatures, governors, military commanders, and groups of civilian ministers. The chaplaincy grew in strength during Revolutionary and Post Revolutionary days. Too, during the War of 1812 and the Mexican War the chaplaincy gained increasing momentum. I point out and

expressed a few words to show that there was one difference in the Confederate story. That is that while it took a century for the religious tradition to which in America, the South had only four short years in which to duplicate the effort - and Southern chaplains had no George Washington to carry their flag. However, the Confederate story was shared under Lee and Jackson and is still amazing.

Leroy P. Walker, the first Confederate Secretary of State writing to President Davis early in 1861, said that if the South expected blessings, it must first recognize the deity from whom such blessings emanate. Walker also stressed the importance of religious habits in promoting discipline among the troops.<sup>4</sup>

Southern lawmakers, however, had tried to keep God out of the camp. There was a bias against the military minister. These laws reflecting this bias served to rid the chaplaincy of some unworthy men. Rather than encouraging an organized corps to maintain high standards in doing an essential job, they simply made a few concessions to religious measures. The fight in Congress about chaplains was bitter, under pressures of forming a new government and providing for its defense, some lawmakers looked upon military ministers as idlers who worked only one day a week. Others seemed to think that churches should be responsible for the chaplaincy. Low salary was proposed as a means of ridding materialistic seekers.<sup>5</sup>

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3. Ibid., p. 16

4. Ibid., p. 23

5. Ibid., p. 24

President Davis' attitude was only lukewarm. War Secretary James Seddon appreciated chaplains even less than Davis. Seddon could not see making noncombatants out of fighting men. But this attitude was changed when pressures were brought to bear. Davis wrote a letter to the Chaplains Association of Tennessee. He allowed for soldiers to be elevated to rank of chaplaincy, but Seddon refused to grant chaplaincy commissions to men in the ranks. In 1864 the Christian Index blasted Seddon for this. Thus, even after legislative recognition of the military minister, one editor criticized responsible officials for not making "adequate provision for the religious culture" of Southern troops, and still later, another stated: "There is wanting in our authorities the spirit of reverence for the Lord and His cause."<sup>6</sup>

Some horse trading chaplains argued that their low salaries entitled them to extra compensation. The chaplain of Mosby's brigade was often seen at gay festivities dancing to the tune of "Sugar In The Gourd" and "All Around the Chicken Roast." Bets were made on the old grey mare occasionally, and some drank whiskey for their health.<sup>7</sup>

Congress cut chaplain salaries from eighty-five to fifty dollars a month, and finally stabilized them at eighty. Later, chaplains received fringe benefits in the form of rations, stationery, and forage for their horses. The forage bill was delayed

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6. Ibid., p. 24f.

7. Ibid., p. 25.

until 1864. One legislator wanted it made absolutely clear that the law provided forage, not horses - with no forage if the chaplain had no horse. He may have been motivated to say this by the chaplain who took a Virginia farmer's horse and said his precedent was Jesus Christ who "took an ass from his owner, whereon to ride into Jerusalem." The chaplain was squelched by an officer who summed up the matter thus: "You are not Jesus Christ; this is not an ass, you are not on your way to Jerusalem; and the sooner you restore that horse to its owner, the better it will be for you."<sup>8</sup>

By far the majority of the Rebel Chaplains, 600, were under thirty. Their average age was twenty-eight, and only a handful were over fifty. Many young chaplains chose the ranks and claimed that it was their duty to fight and not hide behind the ministry while others chose the chaplaincy instead of the ranks. Many of these were young men. Such a man was John F. Hyman who preached five or six times a day during a Georgia brigade revival. He was unhurried and was in the water baptizing fifty converts when orders came to march in the Gettysburg campaign.<sup>9</sup>

Chaplaincy appointments of young men like Hyman were frequently initiated by troop petitions approved by commanding officers. But two of the more publicized Protestant chaplains

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8. Ibid p. 25f.

9. Ibid, p. 26f.

Randolph McKin and J. William Jones, came from the ranks.

McKim, a native of Maryland and an alumnus of U. of Va., enlisted in time for the first battle at Bull Run and by autumn, 1863, was aide-de-camp for Brigadier General George H. Stewart. Later he resigned his commission and became a chaplain in 1864 serving with the 2nd Va. Cavalry.<sup>10</sup>

J. William Jones enlisted as a private and fought at Harpers Ferry in 1861. He was present for every battle in which the army of Northern Virginia participated and was among Lee's surrendered forces at Appomattox. In 1887 he published a book about the war, Christ in the Camp.<sup>11</sup>

#### RELIGIOUS SERVICES AND CHAPELS

"The Lord's will be done" was Secretary Cameron's answer when General McClellan asked permission to use government lumber for the construction of chapels at Camp Dennison. Jones told of a chaplain at Yorktown who did not preach for three months because there was no suitable place. He says further of some of his experiences:

"I went one day to meet an appointment in Davis's Mississippi Brigade, which had lost their winter quarters and comfortable chapel...A steady rain was falling, and I went with no idea of being able to preach, but hoping to meet a few of the

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10. Ibid. p. 27.

11. Ibid. p. 27.

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inquirers under their rude shelters:..To my surprise...I heard a volume of sacred song ascending from the usual place of worship, and found a large congregation assembled on the crude logs. I told them that while I was willing to preach to them, I would not ask them to remain in the rain...not a man stirred, and I preached forty minutes in a constant rain..."<sup>12</sup>

Men responded to this open air service because they were required to do all else in the open.

Some chaplains were provided with assembly tents by friends, by benevolent organizations, by the Army, or by the men of the regiment. H. Clay Trumbull says:

"My next formal service as a chaplain was in the small close cabin of a rolling propeller off Cape Hatteras, on my way to my regiment in New Bern, N. Carolina... When I reached my regiment, I found there a large and commodious chapel-tent, sent from Connecticut as a gift of the unique and efficient 'chaplains' aid Commission in that state."<sup>13</sup>

Chapels were built with whatever material could be found. The meeting places were more durable when it seemed that either army would remain in camp for some duration. William Jones

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12. William Jones, Christ in the Camp, pp. 249.

13. H. Clay Trumbull, War Memories of a Chaplain, p.16.



told of 40 chapels constructed by Lee's soldiers near the Rapidan late in 1863 and 60 on the Petersburg line in the next year. A log cabin was built in December 1863 which was used for a reading room and a place of worship.<sup>14</sup> Trumbull says "It was surprising how quickly old soldiers could make themselves comfortable in such circumstances. Our pioneers... soon after our landing at St. Helena Island had a very large rustic open chapel, or chapel booth, made of posts and poles, with pine branches interwoven, set up at one side of the camp, with seats in it made of double poles supported on small posts or legs. A cracker-box, turned over at a level on a tree trunk, and covered with pine branches, served for a pulpit or reading desk. Every Sunday morning this was draped with fresh and fragrant yellow jessamine, with its green leaves and graceful vines, while the long gray Southern moss aided to make the place attractive to reverent worshipers."<sup>15</sup>

On both sides, services were conducted in whatever type of chapel could be implemented for the time at hand.

#### THE GREAT REVIVAL

Early in the war, the influence of home and church were strongly felt. Weekly prayer meetings were held, pastors made frequent visits to camps, letters from loved ones abounded in piety urging Bible study, secret prayers, and chapel attendance.

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14. Honeywell, Ray J., Chaplains of the United States Army, p. 126f.

15. Trumbull, op.cit., p. 19.

In addition, the army was flooded with religious tracts, newspapers, and books, and there was the influence of Christian men and officers. All of this led to many conversions.

Here is an extract from a newspaper report lifted from Christ in the Camp. "I have spent most of the time for several weeks among the soldiers, to whom I gave about 200,000 pages of tracts, and had conversations on personal religion with over 2,300 in their camps and hospitals."<sup>16</sup> It appears that the soldiers desired to have these tracts given to them to satisfy parents, wives, and brothers as well as sisters. But the fact is that revival meetings or services were held for more than a week at a time.

Reasons for the revival are numerous: 1) there was the evangelistic activities of civilian churches; 2) revival type backgrounds of Southern and Northern troops; 3) a series of defeats which made the troops feel dependent on the Almighty; and 4) the daily facing of death. Norton says in Rebel Religion "In addition, emotionalism among Southern ministers was not nearly as extreme as it was in the North. One northern chaplain even immersed a cannon in a solemn baptismal ceremony. Yet no religious movement spread through Federal armies similar to the one which swept the Confederacy."<sup>17</sup>

Shortly following the first battle of Manassas, and the period of inactivity after it, there came a period of demoralization which was unequalled by any witnessed during the war. The

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16. Jones, Christ in the Camp, -- 264.

17. Norton, op.cit., p. 55f.

people of the South, says Jones, thought this victory had ended the war and that before spring England and France would recognize the confederacy, and the North be forced to acknowledge their independence. Praying ceased; drunkenness was common; brawls between officers, profanity, gambling, few attended religious services in this period. But the Confederate disasters of the early part of 1862 gave rise to a more humble, pious, prayerful army, and the active battles which followed improved the religious tone of the Army. Men have at all times turned to their Maker in the midst of war and this was no exception. As a result of this campaign, there occurred a series of revivals which brought over fifteen thousand conversions in Lee's Army alone, not only in the fields but hospitals. Jones writes in the Religious Herald:

"There is a very interesting revival in our corps. Soon after the return of our army from Maryland, Brother Marshall...began a series of meetings which soon became very interesting - the attendance from the entire brigade being very large, and many coming forward for prayer...There has also been...an interesting revival in Jackson's old brigade...A meeting was begun in our brigade ...two weeks ago, and, despite our frequent moves and the bad weather, we are still keeping up the meetings...Several have professed conversion, there are a number deeply interested about their souls, the congregations are large and attentive, and the interest is daily increasing...We were favored

the other day by a visit from Brother C.F. Fry" (no relation) "who brought a large supply of Testaments, 'camp hymns', and tracts, which were in great demand amongst us. I wish we had a colporter for every brigade in the army."<sup>18</sup>

Emotionalistic approaches were used in preaching. On the eve of the battles of Second Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, Jones preached to a packed house. He appealed to the men to accept Christ as their personal Savior then and there, he said: "How know you but that ere tomorrow's sun shall rise the long roll may beat, and this brigade be called to meet the enemy? It may be that some of these brave men are hearing now their last message of salvation."<sup>19</sup>

In the Summer of 1864 Chaplain James McNeilly was conducting a religious service when a bullet from the rifle of a Yankee strayed across the lines of the 49th Tennessee Regiment. The bullet passed through the head of one worshiper and lodged in the chest of another. This was not an unusual occurrence. However, the meeting stopped. It gave an opportunity for contemplating the providential nature and concern of God. Finally, a song was recommended. Chaplain McNeilly said in his sermon that God could not be controlled through prayers or magic Bibles. His attitude denied that God wore only the Confederate uniform, or protected only the Southern boys. He offered no replacement for pain, no answer to the question of innocent suffering, but, like Isaiah, he sought to comfort

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18. Jones, op. cit., p. 285.

19. Ibid, p. 301.

his people in their misery. He suggested no magic formula, attempted no metaphysical answers. Many other chaplains preached in the trenches and souls were saved even as troops went to battle. In a Virginia holding action, there were four miles of preaching on the banks of the Rappahannock.<sup>20</sup>

Both Lee and Jackson were strong spiritual examples. The latter was probably more fanatically religious than Lee. Jackson was the type of man the soldiers believed because of his faith. He was known as a man of long prayers even in the midst of a battle. He frequently summoned men to kneel with their chaplain before a battle. Baptisms were frequent. They got to be such a daily affair that they evoked a legend about two rival colonels always trying to outdo each other. When one heard that a revival had begun in the other's regiment, he ordered a revival of his own. Then he learned that 15 men in the other regiment had already been baptized. In response, he formed a special detail of 20 men and ordered them immersed immediately.

General Lee, who was a low churchman, did not see anything wrong or disturbing in the emotional evangelism which many chaplains considered their most rewarding form of service. He frequently attended prayer meetings and preaching services and treated chaplains of all faiths with courtesy. Lee insisted on a strict observance of the Sabbath since there were houses of worship. He saw Sabbatarianism as important in the moral and religious sense and, also, as contributing to the personal health

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20. Norton, op.cit., p. 39f.

and well being of the troops. Only duties that were absolutely necessary were to be performed on Sunday. Lee made sure that commanding officers had inspections on Sunday at such time that it would not interfere with Sunday services.<sup>21</sup>

The conduct of public worship is the most conspicuous function of a chaplain, and securing the attendance of the largest number who will benefit from the services is a primary consideration. Few civil war chaplains favored compulsory attendance.

Trumbull says:

"Attendance at chapel services was entirely voluntary in our regiment. There were regiments where the commanding officer required attendance at the church service on Sundays or where he ordered out the regiment for such services; but I preferred to have officers and men entirely free to attend or remain away..."<sup>22</sup>

Revivalism spread from Fredericksburg to other camps. Services lasted for hours. Concerts from Jackson's corps numbered in the thousands. Preaching was important, but the great revival required more than the ability to twist words. The good chaplain began with specific methods. His voice was listened to because of his deeds. He talked to men who could not be scared into religion, unless, of course, when one was confronting death in a hospital or field. Trumbull tells of several conversions of men facing death by wounds, or firing squads.<sup>23</sup> Norton says that

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21. Honeywell, op.cit., p. 131f.  
22. Trumbull, op.cit., p. 19f.  
23. Trumbull, op.cit., p. 127, 195.

revival meetings were not overly emotional or sensational. Holy barks, shouts, and jerking typified in Edward's revival were virtually absent. Although some chaplains and civilian clergymen used these questionable techniques. The nondenominational atmosphere restrained the emotionally inclined ministers. Revivalism grew in intensity after Chancellorsville and did not wane until Gettysburg. In 1862-63 during the winter, 15,000 soldiers made commitments, 500 a week in the army of Virginia alone. Revivals in the hospitals produced fruits, and in 1863 there were campaigns in the trenches. This revivalistic attitude reached a climax in camps along the Rappahannock during the winter of 1863-64.<sup>24</sup> Jones says:

"The march to Gettysburg, the great battle and fearful loss of many of our noblest and best officers and men, very seriously interfered with our regular meetings, but by no means suppressed the spirit of revival...when we came back to rest for a season along the Rappahannock, the "Great Revival" began with all of its power and made wellnigh every camp vocal with the praises of our God...the different denominations sent to the army a number of missionaries and colporters, many of the pastors came on visits to the camp..." 25

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24. Norton, op. cit., p. 48f.

25. Jones, op. cit., p. 312.



Occasionally they were tied on strings and hung from a tree so that passing soldiers could pull them off and read on the march. Trumbull says:

"A copy of this "Silent Comforter" I had suspended in our chapel-tent, and in my own tent, and in each ward of our army hospital...In addition...a copy of it was suspended in the military guard-house of the provost-marshal..."<sup>29</sup>

The Southern Baptist Convention in one year distributed 6,187,000 pages of tracts and 6,000 Bibles. The Methodists gave out 17,000,000 tracts and 20,000 Bibles in one year. Other denominations were at work on the same project. Chaplains engaged in passing out tracts and some even resigned to become colporters.<sup>30</sup>

#### ENLISTMENT PROBLEM

So far I have been discussing the nature of the chaplain and his work. I have treated the chaplaincy as if all faiths were represented from the outset. This is contrary to the fact. Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, the Disciples, and Roman Catholics were represented from the very beginning. There were approximately forty-eight Baptist chaplains on the confederate roster. There were 182 Methodist confederate chaplains, and 217 Presbyterian chaplains in the South. I should add that the Roman Catholic was recognized on both sides but there was some struggle involved with the Jews.<sup>31</sup>

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29. Trumbull, op.cit., p. 29f.

30. Norton, op.cit., p.61.

31. Ibid, p. 115f.



of Southern workmanship, and if I live to be inaugurated the first President of the confederacy, on the 22nd of February, my lips shall press the sacred volume which your kindness has bestowed upon me."<sup>27</sup>

Many supplies were given on credit by the British and Foreign Bible Society given to the South, and they made liberal gifts of Bibles and Testaments for the soldiers. Several donations were given by the American Bible Society and the Bible Society of the city of Memphis, but many of these Bibles were confiscated at the blockade. Appeals were made even to civilians for religious literature. People walked great distances to hand out tracts and Bibles since there was a great demand for Bibles. In 1862 and 1863 the Sunday School and Publication Board collected for army colportage \$84,000. It published and gave out to the army 30,187,000 pages of tracts, 31,000 Bibles and Testaments, 14,000 "Camp Hymns," and many thousands of religious books privately donated by the civilian populace, and religious papers. During 1864 sixty colporters<sup>28</sup> were kept at work distributing tracts and Bibles.

The "Silent Comforter" had a page for each day of the month with an appropriate text in large print. Trumbull placed copies in hospitals on the walls, guardhouses, and probably the John. He arranged to have the pages turned at such a time that the men would be greeted with a new message each morning.

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27. Jones op.cit., p 148.

28. Ibid., p. 150f.

Although this is a course dealing specifically with American Christianity, I feel that something must be said about the Jewish chaplains. At the outset of the war only authorized Christian ordained clergymen were allowed to enter the chaplaincy. As the Northern Protestants were aligned against the Southern Protestants so it was with the Jewish faith. The Southern Jews gave complete support to the slave system. George Jacobs of Richmond owned slaves and felt that it was not contrary to the dictates of Judaism.

When thousands of Jews enlisted into both armies the minority faith pressed for its rights to represent the faith and minister to the spiritual needs of their boys. In the South, equality was recognized immediately. The acts providing for the appointment of chaplains in the confederacy merely stipulated that they should be clergymen with no denominational specifications. As was stated previously "The original Volunteer Bill, as reported to the floor of the House, required that regimental chaplains, who were to be "appointed by the regimental commander on the vote of the field officers and company commanders present," be "regularly ordained minister(s) of some Christian denomination."<sup>32</sup> Attempts were made to have religious society substituted for Christian denomination. In Sept. 1861, a Y.M.C.A. worker happened to discover a Jew, Michael Allen of Philadelphia, serving as regimental chaplain. He began such a clamor over this to the press that the Assistant Adjutant General of the army,

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32. Korn, American Jewry and the Civil War, p.57.

George D. Ruggles, was forced to fall back on the Voluntary Bill and say that henceforth any person serving in any other capacity would be discharged less pay and allowances, etc. Allen resigned his commission rather than take the embarrassment. (It is somewhat surprising to note that today a Jew is the chief of Chaplains.) Finally, Colonel Friedman and his officers elected an ordained rabbi but made sure to elect a civilian. This would determine whether discriminatory legislation against the Jews was to be enforced by government consent. Rep. Arnold Fischel, the Dutch-born lecturer at Shearith Israel Synagogue of New York was elected. He then sought his commission, but it was denied. A bitter campaign was fought when this was made public. On Dec. 26, after much wrangling, Congressman Holman of Indiana offered a resolution to amend the Voluntary Bill and it was passed with only minor changes. The Bill finally became law on July 17, 1862. Thus, equality and democracy was assured for all minority religious faiths.<sup>33</sup>

The work of the chaplain was occasionally hampered by sectarian differences. The amazing growth of the Methodist movement until its members had become the largest group in many states, also the growth of the Baptists and allied associations, resulted to a great degree in a good number of soldiers as well as chaplains who thought that emotional evangelism was the main purpose of the church. This caused some distrust of the adequacy of practices in which sacraments and rituals were

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33. Ibid., p. 58ff.

conspicuous. It was natural also that others should depreciate these religious activities which seemed to belittle such observances. Both appeared deficient to those who considered religious nurture the main task of the church. One chaplain, who combined the best qualities of the high churchman and of the evangelist, said to a man who opposed the use of forms: "You know that when the earth was without form, it was void; and that is the way with many Christians."<sup>34</sup>

The immigrants of recent years affected the relations and work of chaplains. Many had immigrated from northwestern Europe, and settled in the North Central States. Problems arose when they discovered the concern of religious people in America over Sabbath observance and drinking. Perplexity arose when these men entered the army and chaplains made moral issues of matters which they had never viewed in such light. However, the immigrants soon organized independent churches along national and linguistic lines and provided many chaplains for themselves.<sup>35</sup>

The Roman Catholic church brought about a different relationship. Many English and Scottish immigrants had inherited from the controversies of the Tudor and Stuart periods a deep distrust of Catholicism. The large migration of the midcentury, especially that which began in Ireland, changed the population in many communities. Quarrels began to arise because of inequality. Americans would hire them for menial tasks but expect them to live in their own neighborhood. These immigrants bid for a larger

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34. Honeywell, op.cit., p. 132.

35. Ibid., p. 132f.

role in politics and economics but were resented as being an intrusion. Most people believed that nearly all the Irish immigrants were Catholic, thus there was great prejudice against Catholics. This prejudice was present with soldiers and some chaplains. A confederate soldier told a chaplain that he thought the Catholics were the worst people on earth, as he never heard anything good about them, but that he would like to join the church of the sisters who had been caring for him! Another example of this misconceived prejudice against the Catholics occurred in a hospital where a wounded man was greatly surprised to learn that his nurses were Catholics, because he knew Catholics were terrible people. He was asked to give any example of some Catholic wickedness, he could only say that the Catholic in the next bed swore terribly. The curt reply came quickly: "Now, you shut up! I'm not a Catholic but a North of Ireland Presbyterian."<sup>36</sup>

Nonetheless, the close association of the soldiers helped greatly to remove prejudices. Trumbull tells of several instances in which the Commander was a Catholic and would give him hearty support. A young man requested that he not be made to lift his hat during the Protestants prayer to which the Colonel replied: "I've nothing to do with your conscience. You can think what you please. But the chaplain is on my staff. I call on him for his duty. I call on you for your duty. When the chaplain says... 'Let us pray,' that is my order to you, 'Take off your hat,' If you

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36. Ibid, p. 134.

"don't take your hat off, I'll take your head off."<sup>37</sup> Such cases were rare. There was practically no hindrance to his work over Catholics. Trumbull even secured the help of a priest in emergencies and Catholics attended his services, that is Trumbull's.<sup>38</sup>

### SERMONS

Although a chaplain had many duties, he, nonetheless, was a pulpiteer. The soldiers varied in their tastes, but always could remember delivery. Many felt that it was a sin not to be able to quote the sermon, or at least parts of it. The Confederate Chaplain's style was evangelistic, and preaching was the main part of the worship services. Even in the trenches the chaplains preached including Episcopelians, Lutherans, and Roman Catholics. At the outbreak of the conflict, congregations were small, but it took only a short time to gather a large congregation. Attendance grew greatly during the Great Revival. Sunday was the holy day for all. There was no definite time to meet for Protestants. As the influence of religion was felt there began to be two services on Sunday. Toward the close of the war, there was daily worship. At first, unsympathetic officers interfered with services by busy work, but eventually orders were given to observe the Sabbath. Too, long range guns and picket firing distracted services. The shells whizzing overhead sounded like a freight train and caused uneasiness, although these guns were not too accurate. A great interest was shown toward religion.

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<sup>37</sup>. Trumbull, op.cit., p. 22

<sup>38</sup>. Ibid, p.23.

One soldier said that civilian ministers were wasting their time. Why should they preach to "little squads in the churches," when they could become chaplains and reach so many more souls. <sup>39</sup>

Sermons were usually simple, brief, and not always eloquent. Chaplains did not fail to preach against immoralities, and so forth.

Most sermons were exposition on biblical texts. Here are some texts taken from Norton's book Rebel Religion. <sup>40</sup>

Situation

Sample Texts

Early months of war and first encountered of hardships of military

"We know that all things work together for good.. Be ye men of good courage."

During relative inactivity 1862

"Who is on the Lord's side?"

When a Confederate unit appeared surrounded

"Many bulls encompass me, strong bulls."

Following successful conclusion of Manassas campaign.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."

On the eve of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg campaigns

"Say ye to the righteous it shall go well with them."

When the outcome of the war was apparent, mid March, 1865

"The Lord reigneth...clouds and darkness are round Him. Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne."

As you can see from this survey, sermons were generally appropriate. The Deuteronomic philosophy was used, namely, God rewards the good and punishes the bad. Chaplains definitely intended to preach contextually. But many chaplains avoided war

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39. Norton, op.cit., pp 67ff.

40. Ibid, p. 76f.



topics, and especially the slave issue. Chaplains, at least some, preached "as a dying man to dying men." The field chaplain could not at any time write out a new sermon. He often had outlines in his bag probably used in a seminary homiletics class. When the pouch was void, he preached from the heart and sometimes reversed the Deuteronomic historians' view, but, rather, asked questions like "Who is on the Lord's side?"<sup>41</sup>

But if it appears from this that most chaplains were unpolished in their sermon preparation I must immediately add that the contrary is true. Trumbull felt that careful preparation made sermons more attractive, so he usually wrote his in full. Preaching without notes was simply talking and not preaching which has relevance for today. It was usually true that sermons were short unless it was a hospital service when a longer sermon was given. Trumbull says of his sermons:

"Before entering the army I had always been accustomed to extemporaneous address. I had never used a manuscript until then, but I not cultivated the habit of writing, for very good reasons. I was with the men constantly through the week. They were accustomed to hear me speak informally day by day. If I did the same thing at a formal Sunday service it would seem

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41. Ibid, p. 78f.



less of an affair than if I came before them with something specially prepared for the occasion...I soon found that officers and men would come out in larger numbers when they knew I had a written discourse...One Sunday morning, as I was preaching without notes, a soldier came to the entrance of the chapel-tent, and looking in, said to a comrade: "Pshaw! he is only talking. I thought he was preaching," and turned away in disgust."<sup>42</sup>

So we can see from this quotation that one's sermon preparation was extremely important.

In regard to the beyond the call of duty of the chaplain, suffice it to say that some chaplains felt that preaching was their most important calling, and refused to fight. On the other hand, many chaplains shouted "Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition." Many were quite vicious with weapons. Some would prefer to cripple a soldier because this would put him out of action. This certainly is not the important work of a chaplain.

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42. Trumbull, op.cit., p. 98f.

### CHAPLAIN'S ASSOCIATION

In the Confederate ranks, there was a close feeling of brotherhood. This was largely as a result of the Chaplain's Association. This association was concerned to keep records of each person in the ranks and correspond with the home churches. They attempted to increase the number and efficiency of chaplaincy. There were still vacancies to be filled as late as 1863. As time<sup>43</sup> passed the number of chaplains increased.

Likewise, there were associations in the North. They sought to increase rank and pay.

Finally, chaplains corresponded with family, helped distressed soldiers and families through an agency, encouraged benevolent giving, taught in chapels and prisons, and encouraged hobbies.

One can see from this short paper that the history and work of the chaplains, both North and South, is a heritage that we shall not soon forget. Indeed, there were brave men in uniform comforting their men and pointing them toward eternal realities while marching toward Appomattox.

These men on the road to Appomattox in the chaplain's dress represent the sort of men who have been in the United States army and navy from its beginning, and who are still to be found there. The service which can develop such personalities is worthy of honor from all. The country for which such men live and battle

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<sup>43</sup>. Jones, op.cit., p. 230f.

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